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CIA DENIES CAR BOMB INVOLVEMENT
WASHINGTON

The CIA says it had nothing to do with a March car bombing that killed 80 people in Beirut, Lebanon, and criticized a report for giving "the totally false impression" the government was involved in terrorism, The Washington Post reported Sunday.

"This misleading theme has been picked up by a number of other journalists as fact and has even been cited by the Shiite terrorists as one of the motives for hijacking TWA Flight 847," CIA spokesman George Lauder wrote in a letter to the newspaper, which was published in Sunday editions of the Post.

In the May 12 article, the newspaper reported that President Reagan directed the CIA last year to train and support counterterrorist units, made up of Lebanese and other foreigners, for strikes against suspected terrorists before they could attack U.S. targets.

The story said members of the units "acting without CIA authorization, went out on a runaway mission and hired others in Lebanon," to plant a car bomb in March outside the residence of a Shiite Moslem leader believed to be behind terrorist attacks against U.S. facilities.

The bomb's explosion killed 80 people.

Lauder wrote that the House Select Committee on Intelligence investigated the report and said on June 12: "The committee's review has uncovered no evidence that any U.S. intelligence agency has encouraged or participated in any terrorist activity in Lebanon."

Two committee members, however, told the Post Saturday the report did not directly address the newspaper's article but dealt with a resolution by House members who accused the CIA of financing hit teams as a result of the bombing.

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